

Coeur d'Alene Forest Plan Revision Workgroup "DRAFT"

January 22, 2004

Meeting Notes

Attendees: Forest Service: Joe Stringer, Linda McFadden, Carolyn Upton, Kent Wellner, Harry Steele. Regional Director to U.S. Senator Mike Crapo – Mitch Silvers. General public: Richard Dihood, Michael Wells, Suzanne Jude, Brett Zimmerman, Paula Lyon, David Vig, Wilfred Schneberger, Glen Rothrock, Jeff MacLennan, Chuck Murray, Bryan Chambers, Jim Finlay, Bill and Barb White, Larry Yergler, Bill Alexander, Al Beauchene, Alan Dragoo, Bob Finlay, Duane Adams, Don Capparelli, Earl Castleberry, Larry Jennings, Richard and Alberta Lambert, Wendell and Twila Little, Bob Lowe, Kurt Lyon, Mike Reynolds, Don Rower, Terry Smith, and John Spellman.

Introduction

Joe Stringer – District Ranger, Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District

Objective of this meeting is to provide information on issues and objectives that are used in the process of Forest Planning revision.

Key concerns for this meeting in relation to Forest Plan Revision:

1. Forest Health/Vegetation – provide information for work groups on ecosystem succession
2. Recreation Access – inform group on some factors affecting how decisions are formulated.
3. Forming Work Groups/Assigning Tasks

Forest Planning is making decisions to manage for desired outcomes.

Presentations

Joyce Stock – USFS Silviculturist, Coeur d' Alene River Ranger District

The presentation focused on **ecosystems** and how they work and fit together as an interacting system composed of living organisms and their environments.

There are four components that contribute to the CDA vegetative condition.

1. **climate/soils/site** – prevailing westerly winds carry maritime (moist, warm air from Pacific) creating vast differences in amounts of precipitation in forest areas. E.g. CDA 17 inches per year compared to Lookout Pass with 54 inches of precipitation per year.
2. **species composition** – compared to 100 years ago White Pine, which is a keystone species, is down from 55% to 7%. This in part is due to Blister

Rust disease, which has decimated the forest population. Doug Fir percentages are up from 100 years ago – from 30% to 77% of the forest.

3. **structure** - we are now seeing substantial change in the age of the species of tree in the ecosystem.

	100 Years ago	Now
Young	20%	17%
Middle	33%	51%
Mature/old	45%	31%

4. **function** – is the change that is caused by succession, fire, insects and disease. Fire is a keystone of the process. Insects and disease as the main disturbance are now replacing fire. This in turn, will further increase the risk of fire in the forests.

	100 years ago	now
Not disturbed	succession	succession
Disturbed	fire	Insects/disease

Q: What has caused the change in species composition? Is it selective logging, root disease, or other factors?

A: Root disease plays a large part. Larch and White Pine have more resistance to root disease with Doug Fir being the most susceptible.

Q: What is definition of succession?

A: Succession, basically, is the pathway to who wins and who loses without outside disturbances.

Q: After logging, how long do you wait to replant an area?

A: Within five years, we try to be very prompt.

Q: When is Cedar Mountain scheduled to be replanted?

A: It was logged three years ago, burned last spring in preparation to be replanted this spring.

Q: Is man considered part of the ecosystem?

A: Yes, you must consider how man interacts.

Q: Do soil deficiencies cause root rot?

A: Potassium in high levels might contribute to root rot, however this is just a hypothesis as there has been no research to prove it.

Q: How come someone has not invented a spray to prevent bark beetle infestation?

A: There are some chemical treatments, however they are not a very long-term solution.

Kent Wellner – Recreation Planner for the Idaho Panhandle National Forest

Decisions in the plan will be based on **management areas**, rather than specific roads or routes. A **management area** is a part of the forest, of varying size, which has decisions being made on what can and can't be done. The management areas are set up on a grid – see example below:

	Motorized	Non-motorized
Winter	Y/N	N/N
Summer	Y/N	Y/N

The plan will not analyze roads or trails, but rather grids as a whole. No motorized access between routes is a big planning decision. Access is basically what recreation does. It decides what users can access the forest in certain areas.

Q: Who makes the decision on what roads are open or closed?

A: The District Ranger. The local district makes the decision based on many variables.

Q: Can an outfitter put a trail between two roads?

A: This request must go through the NEPA process. This process contains analysis and public comment.

Q: Do you allow outfitters to have spike camps?

A: They must get approval through the permit system, and it is kept on record at the district office.

Comment: Hunting areas closed to backcountry horseman unfairly.

A: We try to be fair about the decisions by getting input from user groups at meetings like this.

Comment: The grid that you are using to make decisions should have three columns. You should add joint use - along with motorized and non-motorized.

A: That is a good idea. We will forward that to Jack Dorrell, our recreation person on the district.

Q: Can forest be sustainable with high use: noise and people disturbing wildlife?

A: There are many difficult decisions to make. We are trying to make the decisions that will allow the same opportunity now and in the future for forest visitors to have a quality experience.

Q: There seems to be not enough patrol rangers to protect the forest – why is that?

A: Not enough money is being budgeted by the federal government to provide the number of enforcement rangers necessary to patrol all the areas as frequently as needed.

Q: Is this a 100-year plan?

A: The goal is not to produce a 100-year plan – only for about the next ten years. The plan will have to be upgraded as increased population increases the pressures on the forest uses.

Comment: Is motorized vehicle traffic more or less disturbing to wildlife? Shouldn't all human intrusion be banned??

Comment: In Quebec, Canada there are 10,000 miles of ATV trails that attract thousands of users who spend lots of money in local communities. This should be done in Idaho.

At this point in the meeting, **Carolyn Upton** began the process of having the group decide how to break down into smaller work groups for the next meeting. Some members of the group were concerned that recent newspaper articles about the meetings did not contain enough of the group's dissenting viewpoints. It was pointed out that the USFS was not providing the information to the press. The reporters attending the meetings decide what gets included in their articles. Another concern was that data being collected by inexperienced summer seasonal employees was being used for making management decisions. The group was assured that the skill level of the staff collecting data for analysis was quite high. Seasonal employees did not do this research.

Desired Condition Statements

Three handouts were distributed to the group describing **Desired Condition Statements**. These handouts showed examples of desired condition statements, information on how to write them, and a set of worksheets to use to produce the groups' statements.

There was much discussion among the group on what the best process would be to accomplish this task. It was decided that it was best to break down into small

groups, with each group working on the first three revision topics to start. These topics will be:

1. Vegetation 2. Fire Risk 3. Timber Production

NEEDS FOR NEXT MEETING:

It was decided to hold two concurrent meetings, one at Silverton and one in CDA for reasons of easier access for group members – less driving in inclement weather. The group requested that Forest Service staff be available for answering questions during the working sessions. Another request was to have maps and other resource materials available for their use during the sessions. This resource material should include guidelines that the Forest Service has to adhere to when dealing with issues such as: old growth forest, urban interface, wildlife, etc.

The deadline on producing a Desired Conditions document will be extended from original estimated completion date to accommodate group input.

It was a concern of the group that their effort count in the decision making process. They wanted to be able to share information with other groups working on the plan in all districts of the forest. They were told checking the website for information was one way to accomplish this.

The group was tasked with filling in the worksheet on the first three desired conditions and bringing their draft copy to the next meeting as homework. At this meeting there will be no presentations. The actual workgroup process will start.

NEXT MEETING:

February 5th at your choice of location – concurrent sessions

Silverton office – Coeur d’Alene River Ranger District 7:00PM

Supervisor’s Office – Idaho Panhandle National Forest 7:00PM

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